

### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A test medium and method for detecting, quantifying, identifying and differentiating up  
to four (4) separate biological materials in a test sample. A test medium is disclosed which  
allows quantifying and differentiating under ambient light aggregates of biological entities  
producing specific enzymes, which might include general coliforms, *E. coli*, *Aeromonas*, and  
10 *Salmonella* or *Shigella* in a single test medium. A new class of nonchromogenic substrate is  
disclosed which produce a substantially black, non-diffusible precipitate. This precipitate is  
not subject to interference from other chromogenic substrates present in the test medium. In a  
preferred form, the substrates are selected such that *E. coli* colonies present in the test medium  
show as substantially black, general coliforms colonies show in the test medium as a blue-  
violet color, *Aeromonas* colonies present in the test medium show as a generally red-pink  
color, and *Salmonella* or *Shigella* colonies show as a generally teal-green color. Other  
microorganisms and color possibilities for detection and quantification thereof are also  
disclosed. An inhibitor and method for making a test medium incorporating the inhibitor are  
disclosed.